

THE EDITOR'S DESK

As the first volume of *IJMES* comes to a conclusion, all our contributors deal, in one way or another, with the problems faced by the modern Middle East in meeting the needs of the contemporary world. Dr Ervand Abrahamian, of the Research Institute on Communist Affairs, Columbia University, discusses the conflict between nationalism and internationalism on one side and regionalism and communalism on the other in considering the division which arose in Iran following World War II between two Communist parties, the all-Iranian *Tudah* and the Azerbaijani *Firqah-i Dimokrat-i Azerbaijan*. It is interesting to note how much this conflict reflects the centuries'-old division in the Middle East between the need for unity and central control, largely to develop the economy and defense, and the desire for communal autonomy to leave the many different religious, social, economic and ethnic groups in the area to live and develop according to their own laws and traditions. The union finally imposed on the two Communist parties by the Soviet Union was, indeed, ingenious, but in fact it did no more than preserve the traditional Middle Eastern solution to this problem, providing a structure of autonomy and disunity within a façade of unity.

To Dr Fazlur Rahman, Professor of Islamic Philosophy at the University of Chicago, change in the Islamic world can best be achieved by working through and developing the established institutions and traditions of Islam. But after describing the difficulties placed in the path of such reform by the entrenched conservatism of the bureaucrats and the 'Ulemá' and what he describes as the 'cultivated duplicity' of the intellectuals, he concludes that a more direct secular approach may be the only practical solution, however much it seems that an effort to adopt Islam to the modern world would be more effective and permanent.

Two of the problems alluded to by Dr Fazlur Rahman are discussed in detail by Dr Carter V. Findley, of Washington, D.C., and Dr Donald M. Reid, of Georgia State College, Atlanta, Georgia. Dr Findley discusses the structural reasons for the conservative nature of the Ottoman bureaucracy, as it existed on the eve of the nineteenth-century *Tanzimat* reform movement. On the basis of exhaustive research into the Ottoman bureaucratic records, Dr Findley concludes that it was the manner by which the Ottoman bureaucrats were organized, promoted, and compensated, more than their education and training *per se*, which led them to comprise such a self-serving, exploitative, and conservative body and which made the bureaucracy such a recalcitrant instrument of reform throughout the nineteenth century. In applying the techniques of modern social scientific analysis to information found in the Ottoman archives,

Dr Findley has pointed the way toward the most useful and effective method of research in this area in the future.

Turning from the official and general side of reform, Dr Reid discusses the extent to which individual attitudes to life and work among Muslims and Christians came to be influenced by ideas of free enterprise and *laissez-faire* in Syria and Egypt in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. All the significant nineteenth-century Ottoman reformers felt that modernization inherently involved an ever-widening extension of the scope of government as well as of its control over individuals and the previously autonomous groups and organizations which had so long formed the vital substratum of Middle Eastern society. Dr Reid demonstrates that while this autocratic concept of reform continued to prevail in the Arab portion of the Ottoman empire into the twentieth century, there was an important segment of Arab writers who saw clearly the advantages of individual initiative and the stifling nature of government control, however well-intentioned and well-planned it might be.

Future issues. Among the contributions that will appear in volume II of *IJMES* are: Omer Lütfi Barkan, 'The Sixteenth-Century European Price Revolution in the Middle East'; Gene R. Garthwaite, 'The Bakhtiyari Khans, the Government of Iran, and the British, 1846-1915'; Lenn E. Goodman, 'Ghazali's Argument from Creation'; Nikki R. Keddie, 'The Iranian Power Structure and Social Change, 1800-1969: An Overview'; Avigdor Levy, 'The Officer Corps in Sultan Mahmud II's New Ottoman Army, 1826-1839'; M. B. Loraine, 'A Memoir on the Life and Poetical Works of Maliku'l-Shu'arâ Bahâr'; Şerif A. Mardin, 'Ideology and Religion in the Turkish Revolution'; Bradford G. Martin, 'Mai Idris of Burnu and the Ottoman Turks, 1576-78'; Michael E. Meeker, 'The Black Sea Turks: Some Aspects of their Ethnic and Cultural Background'; Yusif Sayigh, 'Problems and Prospects of Development in the Arabian Peninsula'; Dennis N. Skiotis, 'From Bandit to Pasha: First Steps in the Rise to Power of Ali of Tepelen, 1750-1784'; John P. Spagnolo, 'Mount Lebanon, France, and Dâûd Pasha: A Study of Some Aspects of Political Habituation'; Charles Wendell, 'Baghdâd: *Imago Mundi*, and other Foundation-Lore'.

STANFORD J. SHAW